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53151
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of Marketing Services
Washington 25, D. C.

July 8, 1945

SPECIAL COMMODITIES BRANCH MEMORANDUM NO. A-4

To: All Divisions and Sections, Special Commodities Branch
From: H. C. Albin, Chief, Special Commodities Branch
Subject: Communications and Records

PART I - GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

The regulations given below supplement OMS Instruction 421.1 and the USDA Style Manual.

A. Authority to Sign Correspondence

OMS Instruction 421.1 defines the correspondence which must be prepared for the signature of the Administrator, the Director and the Branch Chief, and authorizes the Branch Chief to redelegate authority to sign certain types of correspondence.

1. Correspondence for the Signature of the Branch Chief

Correspondence shall be prepared for the signature of the Branch Chief under the following circumstances:

- a. In reply to Congressional correspondence on non-policy matters addressed to a member of the Branch and within the scope of Branch responsibility.
- b. If addressed to officials of other Government agencies (including legations and embassies) on a comparable administrative level, concerning non-policy matters relating to Branch operations.
- c. If addressed to the Director or staff and to OMS officials on an administrative level comparable to that of Branch Chief.
- d. If addressed to the Regional Office of OS. (To be addressed to the Regional Director, attention of the person concerned)
- e. If addressed to OMS Area Offices.

-2-

- f. If it pertains to agenda for Inter-Agency Food Importation Committee meetings (to be addressed to the Chairman of the Committee with a copy for the Secretary of the Committee).
- g. Any correspondence involving Branch policy-making, pertaining to the work of more than one Division, dealing with subjects of a controversial nature, or considered to be of sufficient importance by the Division Chief.
- h. Procedural Instructions at the Branch level.

2. For the Signature of the Division Chief or Designated Representative

Division Chiefs are authorized to sign routine correspondence necessary for the efficient operation of their Divisions within the limits of the preceding paragraph. They may also authorize persons within their Divisions to sign correspondence. Such authorizations must be specific and must be approved by the Branch Chief.

The authority of the Division Chief to sign correspondence includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- a. Routine correspondence within OMS to officials on a comparable administrative level (To be addressed to the Branch or Staff Division Chief, attention of the person concerned).
- b. Correspondence with SCB field representatives (To be routed to the Chief, Operational Planning and Services Division).

3. For the Signature of Order Administrators

Order Administrators are authorized to sign all correspondence on matters directly related to order administration within the scope of authority delegated to the Order Administrator by the Director. This authority includes:

- a. Memoranda to the Secretary of the Petition Review Committee.
- b. Memoranda to field representatives.
- c. Memoranda to Director, Office of Investigatory Services.

4. Government Chairmen of Industry Advisory Committees

By virtue of their position, Government Chairmen of Industry Advisory Committees are authorized to sign correspondence pertaining to their committees, subject to the restrictions of OMS Instruction 421.1 (Correspondence) and OMS Instruction 224.1 (Industry Advisory Committees).

5. For the Signature of Other Branch Officials

Within the limits of specific authorizations from the Branch Chief, the following may sign correspondence:

- a. Administrative Officer
- b. Liaison Representatives

6. Appropriate Complimentary Closes and Titles

- a. Letters to be signed by the Administrator or Director:

Sincerely yours,
(5 spaces)
(10 spaces) Administrator

Sincerely yours,
(5 spaces)
(7 spaces) Director

- b. Letters to be signed by persons within the Branch. (Specific titles should be used whenever possible.)

Examples:

Very truly yours,
(5 spaces)
John H. Smith
Chief, Confectionery Section
Special Commodities Branch

Very truly yours,
(5 spaces)
John H. Smith
Administrator, WFO-112
Special Commodities Branch

- c. Congressional Mail for Signature of Branch Chief:

Sincerely yours,
(5 spaces)
H. C. Albin, Chief
Special Commodities Branch

B. Clearance and Required Number of Copies

Following is a chart showing the routing and clearance and the required number of copies of various types of correspondence originating within the Branch. In instances where the case file is maintained in the Branch, the yellow copy shall be retained for the Branch files. In instances where the case file is maintained in Central Files, the yellow copy shall be attached to the outgoing correspondence.

Where "Standard" routing and action is indicated, the item shall be routed to the Division Chief and Assistant Branch Chief for initialing (on yellow tissue) and Branch Chief for initials or signature.

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>ROUTING SLIP</u>	<u>ACTION</u>	<u>REQUIRED NO. OF COPIES</u>
1. <u>General Correspondence</u>			
Administrator's (see also Congressional mail, Pricing)	Standard	Standard	Blue Jacket, Original 3 whites, salmon, yellow, green, blue
Branch Chief	Standard	Standard	Original, Green, Yellow, Blue
Director's	Standard	Standard	Original, Yellow, Green, Blue
To Field Representatives	Div. Chief Chief, OP&S Division	Sign or initial yellow Initial Yellow	Original, 1 White Yellow, Green, Blue
F From Field Representatives	---	---	Original, 1 White
Intra-Branch Formal Memoranda	---	---	Original, Blue
To Regional Offices	Div. Chief Chief, OP&S Division Asst. Br. Chief Branch Chief	Initial Yellow " " Sign	Original 1 White Yellow Green Blue
2. <u>Order Administration</u>			
Memo of Intention	Div. Chief Chief, OP&S Asst. Br. Chf. Branch Chief Secretary, Order Review & Clearance Committee	Initial Blue " " Sign	Original 12 Whites Blue
<u>Food Order Docket</u>			
(Proposed WFO	(Div. Chief	(Initial Rout-	(Original, 8
(((ing Slip	(whites, Salmon
(Delegation of Authority	(Chief, OP&S	(" "	(Original & 4
((((copies FDA-304
(Memo of Transmittal	(Asst. Br. Chf.	(" "	(Original, Dupli-
((((cate, Original
((((12 Whites
(Press Release	(Branch Chief	(Sign or	(Original, 3
(((Initial	(Whites
(Solicitor's Opinion	(Docket Clerk	((

- 6 -

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>ROUTING SLIP</u>	<u>ACTION</u>	<u>REQUIRED NO.OF COPIES</u>
3 <u>Pricing</u> (Cont'd.)			
Letters to Administrator, OPA	Div. Chief Chief, Auth. & Procedures Section Asst.Br.Chief Branch Chief Vise' S. R. Smith, Dep. Director	Initial Yellow " " " "	Blue Jacket, Original, Uninitialed white to accompany letter, 6 other whites, Salmon, Yellow, Green, Blue
Letters for signature Director of Price, WFA (Use Office of Price letter- head)	Div. Chief Chief, Auth. & Procedures Section Asst.Br.Chief Branch Chief Vise' S. R. Smith, Dep. Director	Initial Yellow " " " "	Original, 5 Whites, Salmon Yellow Green Blue
For Signature of Branch Chief	Div. Chief Chief, Auth. & Procedures Section Asst.Br.Chief Branch Chief	Initial Yellow " " " Sign	Original 2 Whites Yellow Green Blue
4. <u>Other</u>			
Congressional Mail for Administrator's signature	Standard	Standard	Blue Jacket, Original, Uninitialed White "courtesy" copy to accompany letter, 3 other whites, salmon, yellow, green, blue (If addressed to Congressman's home state, prepare extra "courtesy" copy and envelope for Washington Office.)

- 7 -

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>ROUTING SLIP</u>	<u>ACTION</u>	<u>REQUIRED NO. OF COPIES</u>
4. <u>Other</u> (Cont'd.)			
Congressional Mail for Branch Chief's signature	Standard	Standard	Original, Uninitialed white, Yellow, Green Blue
Daily Calendar	Div. Chief Asst.Br.Chief Branch Chief	Initial	Original 3 whites
Reports on Government Limitations	Standard	Standard	Original - Br.Chief 1 White - Asst.Br.Chf. 3 Whites - Chief, OP&S Blue
Priority Application Memoranda	Div. Chief Asst.Br.Chief Branch Chief Chief, Auth. & Procedures Section	Initial Rout- ing Slip " " Sign Record and route to OMF	Original 1 white Blue
Task Letters - Industry Advisory Committees	Div. Chief Chief, OP&S Asst.Br.Chief Branch Chief Chief, Industry Operations Br.	Initial Yellow " " "	Original 3 Whites Yellow Green Blue

PART II - SECURITY OF INFORMATION

A. Safeguarding Secret, Confidential and Restricted Information

OMS Instruction 444.A (formerly General Administrative Instruction No. 3250) sets forth certain instructions which must be observed by all persons responsible for handling documents containing secret, confidential or restricted information.

In addition to the instructions contained in OMS Instruction 444.A, there are set forth below the methods to be used in adapting them to the Special Commodities Branch. Items shown in parentheses are references to the OMS Instruction.

1. Documents Originating Within the Branch

Each person preparing any document (II-A) is responsible for determining its proper classification (II-B) and, if the classification is either Secret, Confidential or Restricted, for marking the document with that classification (V-A). Serial numbers (V-B-1) may be obtained from the Security Representative, and the required records of classified documents will be maintained in his office. File copies, other than those required in the originating office, will not be prepared for classified documents. Since safes and lock cabinets are not available in most offices, it will be necessary to file (V-C) classified documents in the safes and most secure place available in each office.

Obsolete classified documents will be disposed of (V-E-1) by sending to the Administrative Services Division with a recommendation for their disposal in the form of a transmittal for the signature of the Branch Security Representative (refer to Section B, below).

2. Documents Originating Elsewhere and Referred to this Branch

Upon receipt of any classified document from any source, each office is charged with exercising care to assure that the information is safeguarded while in that office, and that no such material is left openly upon desks or in file trays.

If the documents are to be retained in the receiving office, the instructions, under (1) above, for filing will be followed. If the documents are forwarded to another office, it will be necessary to do so in accordance with the instructions outlined in Section V-B-2 of OMS Instruction 444.A.

Any questions regarding the proper handling of classified documents may be referred to the office of the Branch Security Representative, and it should be emphasized that everyone is expected to exercise the utmost care to assure that all documents are classified correctly and recorded before leaving the Branch.

B. Disposal of Records and Files

When it has been determined that it is no longer necessary to retain a particular set of records or files in the Branch files, a memorandum shall be prepared for the signature of the Branch Security Representative, addressed to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, Attention: C. L. Snow, Administrative Assistant, setting forth the following:

- 9 -

1. Detailed list of the records to be transferred to Central Files.
2. A recommendation as to the period of time the records shall be retained in Central Files.
3. A recommendation as to the ultimate disposition of the records (for example, "destroy," "remove to Archives for permanent filing," etc.

In cases where it is recommended that the records be destroyed after a certain period of time, a brief justification must be given. Public data forms and similar records may not be destroyed unless the substance of the information contained in the forms has been tabulated, summarized, or otherwise permanently recorded, and the exact title of such permanent record must be stated in the memorandum. Official records shall not be destroyed until clearance is made through the Administrative Services Division.

The following are a few examples of the kind of material that ordinarily would not be construed as "records", and therefore may be disposed of without the required authority:

1. Extra copies of papers used solely for convenience of reference. This may include so-called "reader file" copies, "tickler" or "follow-up" copies, if their use is essentially temporary.
2. Informational memoranda and transmittal letters that do not serve as bases for official actions.
3. Preliminary drafts or work sheets that do not represent uniquely significant steps in the preparation of other documents.
4. Obsolete blank forms.
5. Surplus copies of mimeographed, multilithed, printed or processed circulars and memoranda.
6. Routine requests for publications, and acknowledgments.

PART III - PREPARATION OF CABLEGRAMS

The Authorities and Procedures Section has been assigned the responsibility for setting up all outgoing cablegrams to foreign representatives of the American Government. The commodity representative responsible for initiating a cablegram shall prepare the message in rough draft form in accordance with the following Branch procedure:

A. Preparation of Rough Draft

The rough drafts should include the following data in addition to the body of the message:

- 10 -

Date of preparation
 Appropriate legation, embassy or consulate
 Legend to appear on carbon copies
 Persons for whom carbon copies are to be
 prepared (excluding copies required by
 State Department)
 The marking URGENT if the message should
 receive priority over other cables

Reference to the incoming cablegram will be added by the Authorities and Procedures Section and should not appear in the body of the message.

B. Routing and Clearance

The rough draft shall be routed to the Section Chief, the Division Chief, the Assistant Branch Chief and the Branch Chief for initialing and to the Authorities and Procedures Section to be set up in accordance with the State Department procedure. Unless it is necessary to change the body of the message, the completed draft will be routed to OFAR by Special Messenger without further Branch clearance. OFAR is responsible for clearance of cablegrams beyond the level of the Branch.

The Authorities and Procedures Section will retain the initialed draft and route carbon copies of the finished cablegrams in accordance with the instructions of the commodity representative.

C. Replies to Incoming Cablegrams

The Authorities and Procedures Section will receive a copy of each incoming cablegram simultaneously with the commodity representative, and, if a reply is indicated, shall set up controls to assure its dispatch within three days after the incoming message is received in the Branch.

PART IV - COMMUNICATION COSTS

Each Division Chief is designated as an "authorizing individual" who shall be responsible for clearing all long distance telephone calls and all telegrams or cables in his Division. In the absence of his Division Chief, no employee of this Branch may make a long distance call or dispatch a telegram without first clearing with the office of the Branch Chief. All telegrams and cables sent from this Branch must be initialled on the blue copy by the authorizing individual.

Before approving such services, each designated authorizing individual shall consider the substitution of one of the following means of communication in the order listed if its use will not seriously interfere with the work:

- Regular mail
- Regular mail special delivery
- Air mail or air mail special delivery (where distance makes air mail quicker than regular mail)
- Leased wire and teletype services to the extent these services are available
- Night letter
- Day letter
- Straight telegram
- Long distance telephone call

-11-

Those authorizing the use of such facilities should be prepared to justify the type of service they approve in every instance or by type where there is a volume of activities requiring the same service.

PART V - PRESS AND RADIO RELATIONSHIPS

The function of issuing news releases and giving interviews to the Press and other public information services on operations of this Administration is the responsibility of the Marketing Reports Division. Situations arise, however, wherein it is desirable for certain of the personnel of this Branch to grant such interviews -- subject to the conditions outlined herein.

For practical purposes, there is no distinction between the disclosure of information to press reporters and to other members of the public, except that the reporter makes the fact known to thousands and the citizen or businessman circulates it among his friends and associates. Therefore, observance of the following standards -- designed to insure accuracy, reliability, and equitable treatment of news as a safeguard to the Government, to the Press, and to the public -- applies in all cases. All offices are urged to keep an open door to reporters for press and radio. The Press, as well as the radio, is an important link between this organization and the public it serves, and it should not be necessary to stress the necessity for maintaining good relationships.

In general, good judgment is the best criterion for determining what information should be withheld. The following types of information should not be given out under any circumstances:

1. Information affecting national security.
2. Premature disclosure of pending decisions or determinations of policy.
3. Factual information or prediction, which has not been made public in any form or which represents the personal -- and unofficial -- knowledge or opinion of the official interviewed.
4. Purely speculative or opinionative statements.
5. Interpretations or observations on matters not wholly within the jurisdiction of the officer interviewed.
6. "Off-the-record" statements of any kind.
7. Information which would be of material value or advantage to one person, if not made known to others.
8. Any statement or disclosure which the person interviewed would not care to have attributed to him by name.

The only purpose of these restrictions on divulgence of information is to safeguard public interest.

In every instance where a representative of this Branch gives an interview to the Press, it shall be in the presence of the Chief, or another person authorized to act for the Chief of his Division. Not later than the day immediately following the interview, the person interviewed shall prepare a memorandum to the Chief, Marketing Reports Division, for the signature of the Chief of the Branch, which will contain a brief summary of the interview and include all of the items discussed.

